

GET YOUR PROJECT STARTED

BRING YOUR NEIGHBORS TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN IOWA'S WATER AND JOIN THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A STRONGER IMPACT

Making continued improvements to Iowa's water quality will take time. But that doesn't mean it's an impossible task. Gather your neighbors, landowners and organizations concerned about your local waterbody, and discuss the commitment you'll make, ways to improve water quality, and gauge potential landowner participation and local interest. Talk to your local soil and water conservation district (SWCD) about starting a project. Then partner with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for help with funding, planning, assessment, technical assistance and more.

It can be hard to know where to start with your project. Applying for a Watershed Planning Assistance Grant can get your project rolling. A watershed planner can help you develop a plan to guide your project and help you apply for funding to start the project. To apply, set up a meeting with your SWCD at your local NRCS service center, your DSC regional watershed coordinator or a DNR project officer (see our staff insert for contacts).

This grant is the first step in getting your project off the ground. It helps you identify problems in your watershed and create a plan for improving your river, stream or lake. In a watershed, everything is connected – you must work upstream to fix problems downstream. That's why projects need strategic watershed plans to make the largest impact on water quality, and DNR, DSC and NRCS can help. With your watershed plan in hand, you can move on to the next step: applying for funds to get the project started and making a real difference in Iowa's water.

Once you've secured funding to put your project on the ground – see our insert on grants – you may want to choose a coordinator to lead the project. Coordinators work daily with landowners, helping them put water-improving conservation practices on their land. Through public relations efforts and meetings, coordinators also raise local support for the watershed project among residents, stakeholders, local and state officials, and of course, landowners. Landowners are the key to any project, since the changes they make on their land make a real difference in water quality.

DNR, DSC, NRCS and your SWCD are there throughout a watershed project to support coordinators and projects.

Flip this sheet over to learn more about the partners, and see our support and assistance insert to learn more about resources to help your project.



Watershed project stages:

1. Creating local interest
2. Assessment
3. Planning
4. Carrying out the project

PARTNERING FOR A STRONGER PROJECT

WORK WITH SWCDs, DNR, DSC AND NRCS FOR ADDED RESOURCES AND TO HELP BUILD LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Watershed projects are all about creating partnerships within a community to improve water quality. Likewise, you can work with our partnership to enhance your project. We work with you throughout your project to assess the watershed for problems, identify potential solutions, help plan the project and even give advice on reaching potential partners in your community.

Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Iowa's 100 Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) are local government agencies, each managed by five elected commissioners. Commissioners assess soil and surface water resources and work directly with landowners and water users to plan for the control and prevention of erosion, floodwater and sediment damages, both rural and urban. With the assistance of partners such as DNR, DSC

and NRCS, SWCDs lead the local effort to address the state's most critical natural resources issues.

[www.iowaagriculture.gov/
soilConservation.asp](http://www.iowaagriculture.gov/soilConservation.asp)

Iowa Department of Natural Resources

The DNR's Watershed Improvement Program works with groups and organizations across Iowa on watershed projects. DNR staff can provide funding, as well as assist with project guidance, technical issues, public relations efforts and more. While you may work closely with the DNR's Watershed Improvement

Program, additional support is available from DNR Fisheries (aquatic life and habitat issues, stream and lake restoration), Wildlife and Forestry (private lands management), Water Monitoring and other programs. The Section 319 program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has provided DNR funding for nonpoint pollution programs, such as watershed projects, since 1990.

<http://watershed.iowadnr.gov>

Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship—Division of Soil Conservation

The DSC provides state leadership in the protection and management of soil, water and mineral resources, assisting soil and water conservation districts and private landowners to meet their agricultural and environmental protection needs. Technical and financial assistance is available to individuals and to watershed groups through cost-sharing, low and no-interest loans and watershed planning assistance and implementation grants. In addition, the DSC is responsible for the reclamation of abandoned mined land, eliminating health and safety hazards, restoring impacted land and water resources, and eliminating off-site environmental impacts.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service provides conservation planning technical assistance, as well as financial assistance through a variety of Farm Bill conservation programs like the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. From helping develop nutrient management plans to designing and installing sediment control basins, the NRCS conservation planners, engineers and technicians offer a wide variety of assistance to producers in watershed project areas.

www.ia.nrcs.usda.gov



*clean water
starts with you.*